



# Gay Buddhist Fellowship

## Newsletter

A Monthly Publication of the Gay Buddhist Fellowship, San Francisco

April 1995

### GBF Calendar

**6 April, GBF Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m.** Monthly meeting, open to all who are interested. For directions, call Ding-Hao Ma:

**9 April, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m.** Dharma talk by Katherine Thanas, head teacher at the Santa Cruz Zen Center.

**10 April, Newsletter Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m.** For directions, call Mark Picciano:

**23 April, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m.** Open discussion.

**14 May, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m.** Peter Goetz and David Sunseri will share their experiences and memories of Zen Buddhist teacher Issan Dorsey-Roshi. Peter and David lived and practiced with Issan at Hartford Street Zen Center in the late 1980s.

**28 May, Sunday Meeting, 10:30 a.m.** Open discussion.

**14-16 July, 3rd Annual GBF Retreat.** Vajrapani Institute in Boulder Creek. Watch for details in upcoming newsletters.

All GBF members are invited to recommend friends who might address our Sunday meetings. Subjects and speakers need to be appropriate, qualified, and of interest to our members. Please bring your suggestions to Ding-Hao Ma or David Holmes, who are now coordinating these meetings. ♡

### What GBF Means to Me

by Jesse

The question "What does GBF mean to me?" immediately raises additional questions such as "Who am I?" and "Why do I have an affinity for GBF?"

GBF is essentially concerned with the universal injunctions "to know thyself," "to thine own self be true," "the unexamined life is not worth living," etc. The Buddha-Dharma unequivocally states that if we learn to relax (*samatha*), focus our attention (*samadhi*), and observe our own mental apparatus, we will discover exactly how our mental strategies generate and charge our egos; how we constantly change our marvelous Buddha nature into emotional reactions.

GBF is about encouraging and facilitating these abilities, so we can better see how our imagination creates the *illusion* that we are emotionally isolated and suffering alone.

I also participate in GBF so I can be around other gay men who, like me, are traveling the path of awakening self-awareness. The dharmic concept of *interdependent origination* explicitly shows that we are the company we keep. The words "company" and "companion" come from the Latin, *panis*, meaning "bread." This is akin to the Latin word, *pascere*, which means "to nourish, pasture, feed."

So the question is, who do we share bread with (companion); what kind of company do we keep (kin)? What kind of pastures, fields, environment, or

belief systems do we move in physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually? Do we nourish ourselves with quality food, quality exercise, quality thoughts, quality friends, quality reading, quality debates, quality meditation? GBF provides me ongoing opportunities to practice all of these things with my gay brothers.

"What GBF means to me" is seeing you at GBF meetings, hearing your authentic words, and getting in touch with the joy of "fellow-feeling" or camaraderie as we synergistically combine our energies in open discussion.

Answering the question, "What does GBF mean to me?" has proven a very profound and provocative mantra for me. It has helped me to clarify and refine my own beliefs, attitudes, and motives regarding GBF. I highly recommend its use to others.

I also encourage GBF members to put these thoughts on paper, reflect upon them, and then polish them into an article for the GBF newsletter. By doing so, you will be contributing to the GBF sangha in the revered tradition of *dana* (meaning, literally, "to donate or give"). You will also be helping with the spiritual evolution of GBF. In addition, the beneficial effects of following this process will enhance your own awakening. ♡

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